

William Berkeley Lewis to Andrew Jackson, January 1, 1845, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>MAJOR WILLIAM B. LEWIS TO JACKSON.

Washington, January 1, 1845.

My dear Genl, Yours of the 18th Ultimo, by the hands of Col. Breedlove, was received yesterday. As it referred to our friend, Mr. Blair, I shew it to him last night which he read with great attention and deep interest, as well as myself. Indeed he was so struck with its importance, particularly the post script which contained the views of Judge Catron, that he determined to write you immediately and, I presume, has done so before this.

We both, General, agree with you that Col. Polk ought to have an entire new Cabinet. God knows I have no prejudice against any member of the present Cabinet, personally I am on the best terms with every one 0377 353 of them, but to retain them would involve, in my opinion, the president elect in the greatest imaginable difficulties at the very threshold of his Administration. A furious and exterminating war would instantly be made upon its most prominent member, by a partisan of the democratic party. No party considerations can prevent it, this I know, and in such a warfare it cannot reasonably be expected that the president himself will escape unscathed. This, then, he should avoid by taking a fresh set of men from the ranks of the people. Were I in his place I would offer no man a seat in my cabinet who belongs to Mr. Tyler's cabinet, or who was a member of Mr. VanBurens. I think he can get as good, if not better, than men in either. Mr. Blair and myself talked this matter over last night and agreed upon three, whom we thought would fill three of the Dept's with distinguished ability, to wit, Messrs. Stevenson, Flagg of New York, and Jno K. Kane of Phila. 1 Stevenson you know—Flagg was, and

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I believe is yet, the Comptroller of New York and is one of the ablest financiers in the U States, and withal has a strong mind and clear head. Kane is an able business man and a perfect gentleman, and is the brother in law of the Leipers 2 who, with their father before them, have always been firm unswerving democrats of the Jeffersonian school. To these might be added Major Donelson, if Col. Polk is disposed to take a member of his cabinet from Tennessee, and Mr. Guthrie of Louisville, 3 who, perhaps, would make the very best Post Master General in the U. States. An Atto' Genl. is still wanting; but I am not prepared, just now, to suggest the name of a person whom I would consider suitable. Indeed, my dear Genl, I would not have taken the liberty of suggesting the names I have, had you not invited me to do so. I believe they are able and sound men, and would administer the Great Depts. of the Government to the satisfaction of both the President and the country. You will percive three of them are from the three great States of Virginia, New York and Penna. which cast their votes for Col. Polk. Mr. Guthrie lives at Louisville and would represent the Democracy on both sides of the Ohio river.

1 Andrew Stevenson of Virginia; Azariah V. Flagg. John K. Kane (father of E. K. Kane, the Arctic explorer) was appointed by Polk U. S. district judge.

2 George G. Leiper was M. C. from Pennsylvania 1829–1831.

3 James Guthrie, Secretary of State in Pierce's Cabinet 1853–1857.